

Interview with executive vice president of Prosci: Mark Dorsett



Mark Dorsett has over 25 years of experience as a global business leader, influencer and corporate executive. He is responsible for Prosci's global business and strategic partnership, with a mission to extend Prosci's reach across geographic markets and vertical industries. Mark interacts with organizations across the globe, focusing on finding ways to help them achieve greater value from their change initiatives. During his tenure in Prosci, he worked with partners and companies across more than 20 countries in Europe, Asia, Afrika, South America and ASEAN..

Can you please briefly introduce your organization through the eyes of its members.

Prosci is a global firm that focuses on developing change management capabilities in individuals and organizations in over 70 countries.

What business needs are you addressing?

With over 20 years of research, we have found that many of the initiatives in organizations do not achieve their intended outcomes. Why, because people don't adopt and utilize the new way of working in the intended way. With our change management approach we can help these organizations achieve much greater results by focusing on how people adopt, embrace and use the new ways of working.

Why is it so difficult for organizations to start the change?

Many times organizations focus solely on the design of the solution, but don't adequately prepare people to use it in the way it was intended. This is true whether the solution is a new process, organizational approach, technology, tool, physical work location or many other things. As a result, very sub optimal usage occurs and the desired organizational result is not achieved.

Why is it even harder to execute planned changes?

Based on the global research we have found several factors which impede progress and adoption: People don't understand why the change is occurring. Too often project teams and even sponsors of change focus on what is changing. They describe the new system, the updated process, the combined organizational model and so on. Our research has found that people really want to understand why the change is being undertaken, why is it being done now and what happens if it is not done. Second, people want to understand what it means to them. How will their job be impacted? Will they need new skills? Will my compensation or job function be changed? And so

on. Unless people understand these items their natural tendency is to reject the change.

What do you propose to make change management part of every project?

The most important step is to make sure it is a priority in the organization. This takes sponsorship. To be an effective sponsor means more than allocating funds or providing a kick off message. We describe sponsorship as the ABC's.

A: be active and visible throughout the campaign, once again staying interested and involved from start to end.

B: build a coalition of sponsors. In nearly every project, many functions and departments are involved. This teams the leader must gain the active support of each impacted area.

C: Communicate directly with the impacted people. To the point above, when people want to understand "why" something is being done they don't want to hear from the communications specialist, the project manager the change manager or others, they want to receive the message directly from the person sponsoring the initiative.

In Business analysis we use user stories. Do you have any "change stories" in your methodology?

Yes, we look at impacted groups and then describe how they do their work today, what it will be like as they go through the transition and then how to perform the work in the future state. We often refer to this as a yesterday and tomorrow exercise.

How do you connect change and the digital economy?

We describe change from two perspectives. There is the technical side, the what is occurring and then the people side, how people are supposed to respond. When we look at digitization the technology can be phenomenal, but if people don't adopt and embrace it, the investment is wasted. Many times I ask people, what percent of the intended benefits are reliant on people acting and doing things differently. We have some sophisticated tools to help measure this, the ROI of change management. But, even at a high level people often answer that 70%, 80%, or even 90% of the expected benefits are dependent on people effectively using the new methods.